



Citizens Want to Know

FLOOD PREPARATIONS

What is American Fork City doing to be ready for the spring runoff through the city?

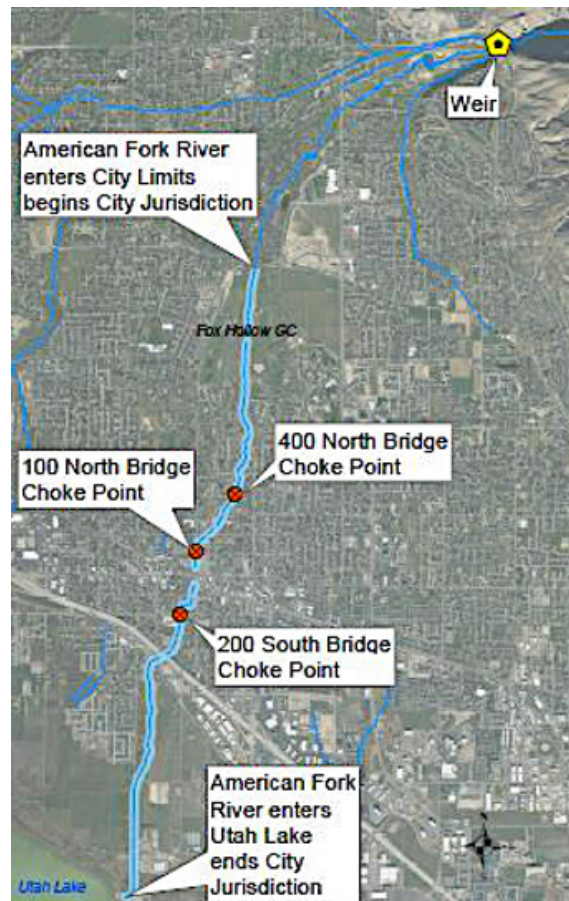
2022-2023 snowpack has been record breaking. With the snow melt anticipated in the spring, American Fork City is actively working to minimize the risks to our community by preparing for potential flooding. The snow melt runs through the American Fork River entering a weir system at the base of American Fork Canyon where it flows through American Fork City and discharges into Utah Lake.

The AF Sewer and Storm Water Division is charged with keeping the weir free of obstructions as well as ensuring snow melt makes its way down five miles of river from the golf course, through the city and down to Utah Lake. Crews walk the entire river at the end of winter and in spring to keep a close eye on the river during thaw season.

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Fast snow melt results in a surge of water which captures debris, clogging the river, especially at narrow underpasses. There are several choke points where branches and leaves tend to accumulate throughout the year and require continuous attention. The Sewer and Storm Water team both manually and with heavy equipment alleviate these flooding concerns.

image: American Fork River choke points in city limits



This winter, crews initiated removal of overgrown vegetation in the river path along 100 West by the boat harbor. Significant work was done clearing the channel, which had become very overgrown. Annual vegetation management will be used moving forward to restrict new trees from regrowing and taking over the channel again.

In February, our crews performed a river inspection at the base of American Fork Canyon where the AF River flows through the city to clear logs and debris that collect at the weir and basin before they enter the river. Along with environmental



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debris, trash and illegal dumping also cause obstructions. Household items such as couches and mattresses are often found in the river bed and require a coordinated effort to dispose of these items properly. This year, staff encountered enough bagged grass to fill a two-ton truck bed. Due to the amazing efforts of the the Sewer and Storm Water Division team, there have been no major backups in the City and we are ready for the next rapid water event.

ACTIVE PREPARATIONS

In March, Mayor Frost hosted and held an emergency preparation meeting with leaders from Utah County, surrounding cities, fire departments, law enforcement agencies including County Sheriffs and Highway Patrol, the forest service, irrigation and water distribution entities. The topic was emergency planning for the upcoming water runoff season. Specifically, Mayor Frost has had conversations with the Utah County Commissioner Gordon to address any issues we can in advance to help prepare for the upcoming runoff. Commissioner Gordon has pledged to assist with County resources those items that may be needed.

At the State level, Governor Cox has warned of flooding concerns statewide and has issued an Executive Order for flood preparedness. The State has evaluated our snowpack in this area and specifically the water content contained in the upper elevations. They have expressed concern if temperatures rise quickly in the spring, but if the temperature remain moderate, they feel the runoff may be handled without severe flooding and damage. Much will depend on the conditions we have in late May and early June. Our preparations now are based on the anticipation of extremely high runoff due to higher temperatures.

Locally, Fire & Rescue, Police and Public Works Departments are coordinating efforts to ensure problematic areas are regularly monitored and an emergency response effort can be easily deployed. Crews will stage k-rail/jersey barriers in problematic areas of the American Fork River to help divert water in the event of flooding. Sandbags will be provided on a limited basis for residents in April at the Public Work lot at 275 E 200 N. More information is forthcoming. Many tips for residents to prepare themselves can be found at <https://beready.utah.gov/Utah-hazards/flood/>.

